

*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

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U.S. House of Representatives  
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CIA RADIO FUNDS PROPOSALS DRAW FIRE IN CONGRESS

The Nixon Administration's support for the creation of a Government subsidized corporation to manage Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty was both praised and chastized by a ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee who spent nearly ten years urging reorganization of US overseas broadcasting activities.

In a speech delivered shortly after the House of Representatives convened, Congressman Dante B. Fascell (Dem-Fla.) commended the Administration for turning its attention to overseas broadcasting but warned that the Congress would not buy any "quarter-measures" and "gimmicks" which bring added burdens to the taxpayers without resolving the problem of conflicting jurisdictions and policies in US overseas public relations activities.

Pointing to the existence of seven separate radio operations aimed at foreign audiences, Fascell said that the message which they send to the world "is frequently garbled by a cacophony of strange and conflicting sounds as each outlet tries to push its own version of 'The American Dream' and its own interpretation of America's prescription for the world's ills."

The Miami Congressman admitted that he would not be adverse to the creation of a mixed, public-private corporation like COMSAT to manage US overseas broadcasting so long as its charter was not restricted to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

Fascell suggested that the time may be running out on US broadcasting operations in foreign countries, particularly West Germany.

He called for "sensible, realistic new arrangements" including joint ventures with the Europeans to give US foreign broadcasting operations a new political footing and to put some of them <sup>on</sup> ~~as~~ self-sustaining basis.

The full text of Fascell's remarks follows.

WHY JUST CIA RADIO FUNDS?

Remarks of

HON. DANTE B. FASCELL of Florida  
in the U.S. House of Representatives

May 24, 1971

MR. FASCELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the Nixon Administration for coming to the Congress this morning to seek congressional approval of legislation which would vest the operation of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty in a non-profit corporation chartered by the Federal Government.

At the same time, however, I would like to suggest that the day for piecemeal adjustment is over -- and that much more fundamental surgery is required if the Congress is to play its proper role in assuring that the United States Government does not speak with a forked tongue to the world beyond our borders.

I have great respect for the work which Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty have performed over the years in carrying the message of truth and freedom to millions of people in Eastern Europe and Asia. To many of those peoples, those two radio stations were the only source of factual information about developments in their own countries and in the world at large.

I am not adverse, therefore, to this kind of dialogue. As a matter of fact, in this age of public diplomacy, I believe that it is imperative for the United States to maintain and enlarge communication with the co-inhabitants of our planet.

The question is, how do we do it -- and with how many governmental or government-supported voices should we attempt to project our message to the world?

At present, that message is frequently garbled by a cacophony of strange and conflicting sounds -- with each separate outlet pushing its own version of the American dream and its own interpretation of the American prescription for the world's ills.

There is Voice of America, with its sonorous tones proclaiming to be the essence of orthodoxy -- though sometimes belatedly -- on matters

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of government policy.

Then there are Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty -- now to be admitted to the official family entitled to open Federal support -- which bring to this new role a tradition of unorthodoxy in the pursuit of their own specialized ends.

Then there is RIAS - Radio in the American Sector -- which tries to scale the Berlin Wall and give the residents of both Germanies, as well as those few Americans within earshot, a liberal dose of American jazz and rock interspersed with news keyed to the particular preoccupations of its listeners.

In addition, there is the American megawatt transmitter in Munich, with the long wave frequency potential of becoming one of the foremost communicators of Europe, whose sporadic, lovely function appears to be the jamming of Soviet messages to its own people and its neighbors.

The Armed Forces Network in Europe is also a part of the American voice which reaches millions of foreign nationals -- as are our military broadcasting activities in the Far East.

All of these activities are supported by the American taxpayer, operate with the sanction of the United States Government and whether rightly or wrongly, are deemed to carry our Nation's message to the world.

Unfortunately, each one of them is pretty much its own boss -- and neither the Congress nor the American people have any clear idea of how they carry out their public mandate or whether they contribute to the advancement of our national objectives.

As I said at the outset, I am not opposed to the setting up of a government-subsidized corporation to manage our overseas broadcasting activities. It seems to me, however, that a corporation in this field, whether modeled on COMSAT or some other model, would be turning its back on reality if it were to concern itself solely and exclusively with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

As nearly a decade of studies conducted by the International Organizations and Movements Subcommittee which I chaired during the 1960s showed, we need a drastic, fundamental reorganization of all U.S. Government-supported broadcasting activities abroad. And the time is

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long passed when we could patch up things by resorting not even to half-measures but to quarter-measures.

There are two more points I would like to make:

First, it seems to me that by attempting to perpetuate existing arrangements, we are skating on very thin ice. The cold war thaw has robbed some of our overseas broadcasting operations of their political viability. I do not know, for example, how long the West Germans will indulge us to run our several, disparate operations on their soil -- but I have a feeling that it will not be very long.

Second, I am not convinced that the American taxpayer should continue to shoulder the full burden of these rather expensive undertakings. There is, it seems to me, a pretty good possibility that under more realistic and practical arrangements, including joint ventures, some of these broadcasting facilities could become self-sustaining or even return part of the investment to the U.S. Government. I have not seen this possibility mentioned in the Administration's proposals.

Mr. Speaker, we live in an age whose very character is shaped by electronic communications. We ought to recognize that fact in our external operations. And we ought to employ the instruments of communication available to us in sensible and imaginative ways so as to advance our national goals and the cause of peace.

I am delighted that after years of persistent prodding by my Subcommittee, the Executive Branch has finally turned its attention to these matters. And I commend the President for coming to the Congress with his proposals. But I doubt that either the Congress or I as one of its members will be interested in any partial solution which would place new burdens on the American public without attempting to go to the heart of the problem which confronts us -- and try to remedy it.